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**EX-OFFICIO  
MEMBER**

Commissioner  
Stanley Moore

Date: July 6, 2020  
To: President Preckwinkle and Commissioners  
Subject: FPCC Emergency Stabilization Request

Dear President Preckwinkle and Commissioners:

In these difficult times, nature has never been more important. Seldom before has it become so apparent to so many how much we NEED nature – to reduce stress, help us stay healthy, offer solace. In Cook County a century ago, far-sighted visionaries understood this need. They worked tirelessly to establish the system of preserves that would provide for ongoing generations the space and natural diversity to explore and get to know and wonder at the rich natural heritage of this region.

We are doing our utmost to maintain and improve the Preserves – one of the most extraordinary civic assets in the country. We were deeply disappointed that the people of Cook County did not have the opportunity to vote this year to increase the property levy for the Preserves. But, the people are voting with their feet. On their own, but in unprecedented numbers, people are flocking to the forest preserves. Parking lots are full and trails are busy. They are serving the exact purpose envisioned one hundred years ago, providing solace in unsettled times. Just when they are most needed, the future of the preserves is most uncertain.

Now, with the public health crisis and economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and with rightful demands to address systemic racism in our government and society, it is unclear when voters will have the opportunity to express their support for the preserves. So we have one specific request of the Board: **Incorporate the Forest Preserves' Pension Fund into the County's inter-governmental agreement with the County Pension Fund, thereby authorizing annual payments to both pension funds from the sales tax.** This requires no increase to the sales tax and amounts to only a very small portion of the annual pension payments currently being made by the County—less than 2%—to help stabilize FPCC pension funding.

This action will not provide resources needed to achieve the ambitious goals of the Next Century Conservation Plan, nor will it solve the urgent capital needs of the Zoo or the Garden. However, it will provide interim stability to the Forest Preserves and allow the district to maintain its current operations, as well as its annual operating support to the Zoo and the Garden, until long term funding for these important needs is secured.

We know this request comes to you during a difficult budget year, but we also know there will never be a perfect time. We hope, therefore, that you will give this request your immediate attention and take action now to stabilize the Forest Preserves.

Sincerely,



Wendy Paulson, Chairperson  
Mark N. Templeton, Vice Chairperson  
Michael DeSantiago, Secretary  
Alan Bell  
Terry Guen, FASLA

Emily Harris  
Sylvia M. Jenkins, Ph.D.  
Maria Pesqueira  
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